New Jersey Man Murdered In Anti-Hindu Violence
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American Public Shocked as "Dot-Buster" Gang Terrorizes Hindus, Attacks Indian Businesses

Trouble had been brewing for some time in the mixed Hindu, black, white and Puerto Rican neighborhoods of Jersey City, New Jersey. "It began at this time last year, during Navaratri," explained a shaken Ramesh Patel of the local Gujarati Samaj. "Incidents were egg-throwing, verbal harassing, pushing women on the streets, swearing, breaking windows of Indian businesses," he went on, "Then this week it escalated."

The "escalation" took place October 1st, leaving one dead and one seriously injured. Mr. Mavron Mody, 30-years old and a manager of Citicorp Bank, had his car stopped by the so-called "Dot-Busters" (the reference is to the Hindu's pottu, the red dot on the forehead). Words were exchanged and an argument ensued. Mody was brutally beaten, fell into a coma and died in the hospital. Another man, Kausal Saran, 20, who was with Mody, tried to intervene in the beating and was himself attacked. He is in critical condition. The identity of the attackers is unknown and no arrests have been made.

The Hindu community reacted swiftly. Five groups-the Gujarati Samaj, Bharati Association, Mahatma Gandhi Association, Garden State Hindu Cultural Association and Baroda Association-banded together to form an ad hoc committee. Dr. Lalita Masson of Jersey City was made chairperson. She told Hinduism Today, "We are quite disturbed. A protest march was held, October 11, to send a message telling people that racism should not exist in the United States today. We have met with the mayor and the police chief-who will be marching with us tomorrow in protest, by the way. Also we have talked with the Federal Justice Department."

There is widespread media attention-national television coverage and articles in the The New York Times. New Jersey's governor strongly condemned the incident. Still she said, "One problem is that the police have made unjust arrests of our

Hindu youth, rather than arresting the assailants. Fortunately, the higher police authorities are very cooperative. Also, we have been getting concerned calls from many civic groups in our area."

Dr. Masson requests that Hindus everywhere write letters to their committee which they can take to the authorities to show the nation-wide and world wide concern over these incidents. Their address is:

Dr. Lalita Masson, Chairperson United Indian/American Association 130 Jewett Avenue Jersey City, NJ 07304 USA Telephone: 201/332-6353

According to Clifford Antony of "News India" in New York, both blacks and Puerto Ricans were responsible. They had targeted Indians for their attacks, "the Shahs and Patels." According to the 1980 Census, Jersey City is 28% black, 19% Spanish (largely Puerto Rican here), and 1% Asian Indian. In recent years more Indians have moved into the area, buying up businesses until they now own one out of three.

Wayne Plumstead, Pastor of the Christ United Methodist Church of Jersey City, told Hinduism Today that the incident's root cause was economic. The city has been changing rapidly in recent years, with rich people moving into new developments which had forced poor people literally onto the street. Indians were being targeted, as well as Koreans and some others, he thought, "because they had come to the town, worked hard and are now better off than people who lived here all their lives." "People are aghast at the incident," he emphasized, "This does not reflect at all the community as a whole."

"I think it is an outrage, a disgrace, the law enforcement should do a better job," said Rev. Grady Dale, Pastor of Jersey City's predominately black Cornerstone Church. He blamed jealousy of some sections of the population against the Indians for the problem and emphasized that he did not believe the gang involved was predominately black. Rev. Grady has no complaints against the Indian community, mentioning that his Indian car mechanic has always been friendly and fair with him. He felt the Indian community should have acted sooner, complaining more strongly to the authorities before things went so far.

When told Hinduism Today had heard some Hindus were leaving the community as they "had endured all they could," Ramesh Patel offered the following advice: "It is important to start a dialog among community leaders. The black community, I hate to use that word black, is the source of the troubles. Hindus have been fleeing such problems in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Africa, Fiji and other places. Running away is not the solution. We need to find out what is really the trouble or if it's perhaps just a matter of people wanting to terrorize Indians who are so peace-loving and easily terrorized."